5-1943
Defender
Chicago, Ill.

White Baby Turns Negro In Miami

MIAMI, Fla. — Born to an unwed white mother of 20 years, a Miami young lady 20 months old awoke the other morning to find she was not a brown-skinned white baby but really had Negro blood running in her veins.

The bouncing young lady had been in the home of white foster parents for over a year. Her mother was sent to the insane asylum sometime ago.

Becoming suspicious of the child's nationality as she grew older, the white foster parents looked for an out. They found one in Jacksonville. A Negro couple accepted the adoption of the baby and the registrar of vital statistics there instructed Miami to substitute a Negro adoption certificate for the white parentage birth certificate.

Negro Strain Dominant In Romantic Brazil

'Africa's Blood Courses Through Veins Of Latin America'--Preece

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles by Harold Preece, author of "Lighting Up Liberia" and noted authority on the Negro in Latin America.)

By HAROLD PREECE

Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa

The face of Africa looks at the world from the man of Brazil. The blood of Africa courses through the veins of the second largest nation of the Western hemisphere. The old gods of the Congo crossed the Atlantic with their people and dwelt in new temples along the banks of the Amazon. The first slaves brought from Africa to Brazil carried with them water from the sacred Congo to pour into the waters of the mysterious Amazon. The meeting of the waters was a symbol of that meeting of the races which produced the modern Brazilian: child of old African kings, of Indian emperors building civilizations older than greater Babylon, of haughty Portuguese planters mating with captive black princesses to produce talented mullato children growing up to become poets, statesmen and scientists.

BRAZILIAN'S STORY

That is the romantic account of his people given me one night by a Brazilian, who had the blood of all three races, as we talked in a Harlem cafe just off Lenox avenue. It may not be history in the strict sense—but it goes a long way toward explaining that country where the color of a man's skin counts for less than the gifts of a man's mind.

More than 40,000,000 people live in Brazil which is larger than the United States plus another Texas. Forty per cent of those 40,000,000—16,000,000 in round numbers—are estimated to have varying proportions of Negro blood. Some authorities say that the percentage is much higher and that the majority of Brazil's citizens would be classed as Negroes in Mississippi or Georgia.

HITLERISTIC ATTITUDE

The haughty Spanish Dons of the Argentine Republic, with their strong leanings toward Hitler, sneeringly call Brazil "a n——r nation." Brazil shrugs its shoulders at the vicious insult and goes ahead building a culture minus Jim Crow signs, minus labels damning a man to the little private hells set up by Mississippi and Georgia.

Wherever one goes in Brazil, he sees pictures of a Negro that was one of the greatest presidents that any republic ever had. That Negro was the honored Nilo Pecanha who governed for all people in his country but who never bothered to deny that he was a black man.

VALIANT LEADERS

Negroes today are brave and well-disciplined officers in the great army that Brazil is building to protect all the Americas against any future attacks by "conquerors" from Europe's beer-halls. They rank from colonel to private, and they are inspired by the example of one of Brazil's greatest soldiers, Henrique Dias.

Henrique Dias was the black man who helped rally Brazilians of all countries to drive out the invading Dutch when they seized his country during the days of the joint Portugese-Brazilian empire. He died a nobleman of the empire, and a member of the exclusive Ordem de Christo (Order of Christ) open only to the bravest of the Emperor's knights.

FETTERS BROKEN

For the Negro may have come to Brazil in chains; but from the introduction of slavery in 1532 to emancipation in 1884, he was busy breaking those chains which bound him and his fellow Brazilians. Indeed, democratic institutions were first established in Brazil by the never-surrendering, ever-fighting Negro. Captive Haussas, Yorubas, Mandingos, and members of other African tribes set up independent Negro states in the depths of the forest long before the establishment of the American republic.

DECLARES INDEPENDENCE

Palmares, a democratic kingdom of runaway slaves, declared its independence of the white man long before the establishment of the American republic. It took the best troops of Portugal to conquer Palmares and even today the descendants of its founders live in hidden villages, far back on the Amazon, stubbornly disdaining any contact with the white man.

El Chico Rey (The Little King) was wrested from his domain in Africa and brought to Brazil as a slave. But he set up another kingdom in the land of exile, after having earned enough money to buy his freedom. He populated this new kingdom by buying the freedom of still other slaves and setting them up as independent farmers in the little state where he ruled as unquestioned sovereign.

CHERISH MARTYR'S MEMORY

Just as we revere the memory of great Negro women slave leaders such as Harriett Tubman and Sojourner Truth, so Brazilian Negroes cherish the remembrance of the brave Haussa princess, Luiza Mahin.

It was Luiza Mahin who led the other Mohammedan Negroes of her country in the great slave rebellions of the early 19th century. Nobody ever knew what became of her after the crushing of the rebellions, but her son, born of a Portugese father, became a well known Brazilian poet.

TELL SAGAS IN SONG

Maybe, it is not surprising that the son of Luiza Mahin should have become a poet. Every tribe in Africa has its honored artists who tell in song and story of the great deeds done by great men and women. The impulse which makes men write stories and verse also makes them despise tyrants and mongers of race hate.

American school children memorize the verses of two white New Englanders, Longfellow and Whittier, without once hearing of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes. Brazilian school children, too, learn the rhymes of the white poets, but the verses that stick in the memory are the beautiful lyric stanzas composed by Antonio Goncalves Dias and Jose Bastilio da Gama—both Negroes.

EARLY DEATH

Cruz e Souza, who lived to be only 35, has been called the Walt Whitman of Brazil because he broke with polite poetical forms and made his own technique for his bitter attacks upon injustice and oppression. Indeed, this young Negro was a brother in the spirit of his American contemporary, Walt Whitman—he sang the common man as did Whitman, he had the same impatience with traditional cruelties and stupidities masquerading as truth and righteousness.

Where would Brazilian culture have been without that infusion of genius which is received from the always artistic soul of the Negro? To answer that question, one might ask, would there have been any Brazilian culture without figures like the Negro Brazilian and world citizen, Tobias Baretto, lawyer, philosopher, poet and, humanitarian, who did so much to his country conscious of modern intellectual trends?

IMMORTAL SCULPTOR

Similarly, would there have been any Brazilian sculpture without the Negro, Antonio Francisco Lisboa, remembered under the popular name of Alejadhino? Would Brazilian art, in all its forms, continue to advance without the feminine inspiration of the morena—the mixed-blood Negro girl who is literally "Miss Brazil" and whose praises are sung everywhere by the poets of Brazil.

Brazil's Negro citizens have also enriched their country with their aptitude in the healing arts. Brazilian psychiatrists heal mentally sick persons according to the methods developed by that country's greatest physician of the mind, the Negro, Dr. Juliano Moreira.

Brazilian Negroes have shown themselves in every field, to be equal to the white man in their grasp of what is rather inaccurately called "white culture."

OUTRANKS HARLEM

In the Brazilian city of Bahia—which outranks Harlem as a center of Negro culture—thousands of Negroes, still speaking the ancestral dialects of Africa, worship their ancestral religions without fear of persecution. Most Brazilian Negroes are, of course, Roman Catholics. But the African nature cults are protected by law—as are the almost vanished Negro Mohammedan sects—and are united in an association to protect their beliefs against the intrusion of fakers and charlatans.

Four hundred thousand Negroes in the state of Bahia speak a Portugese-African dialect as difficult for outsiders to understand as that French-African dialect spoken by many Negroes in the bayou country of Southern Louisiana. Some Negro families in Bahia still import religious and other goods from West Africa, and visit relatives living on the nearby continent.

One thing is certain. If America means to be good neighbors with Latin America, she is going to have to take some stiff lessons from Brazil on this whole business of color. For our good neighbors of Latin America are not simply Latin-Indian or just plain Latin as many Americans think. They are proudly Afro-Latin-Indian.